

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary
United States Department of the Interior
1100 Ohio Drive SW
Washington, D.C. 20420

May 6th, 2021

Dear Secretary Haaland,

As members of the New Jersey congressional delegation, we write to urge you to promptly fill the federal vacancy on the New Jersey Pinelands Commission.

The Pinelands National Reserve is an often overlooked jewel in New Jersey. Spanning 1.1 million acres and covering 22 percent of New Jersey, the Pinelands is home to 500,000 New Jersey residents, 850 species of plants, and 397 species of animals, including 43 threatened or endangered species. It contains picturesque rivers, forests, public parks, wildlife refuges, farms, and towns. On any given day you will see families kayaking together, grandparents teaching their grandkids to fish, and students admiring the Pygmy Forest. It truly is a majestic place. The Pinelands is also an economic engine for New Jersey, benefiting the tourism, agriculture, and fishing industries.


The Pinelands would not be possible without the work of the New Jersey Pinelands Commission. The Commission was founded in 1979 by the State of New Jersey to protect the Pinelands following the establishment of the Pinelands National Reserve by Congress in 1978. By state law, the Pinelands Commission is a 15-member board that consists of seven members appointed by the New Jersey Governor, seven county representatives, and one federal representative appointed by the U.S. Secretary of the Interior. For over forty years, the Commission has worked to ensure the protection of cultural resources for future generations through the implementation of the Comprehensive Management Plan that guides land-use, development, and natural resource protection programs in the Pinelands.

Since March 2017, the Pinelands Commission has not had a federally appointed board member. Filling this seat is vitally important for the New Jersey Pinelands Commission to fulfill its mission to “preserve, protect, and enhance the natural and cultural resources of the Pinelands

National Reserve, and to encourage compatible economic and other human activities consistent with that purpose." We urge you to fill this seat promptly.

Thank you for your commitment to stewardship of the Pinelands National Reserve and public lands across our nation. We look forward to hearing from you regarding your plans to fill the federal vacancy on the Pinelands Commission.

Sincerely,



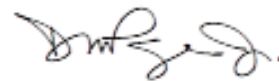
Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mike Sherrill
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
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